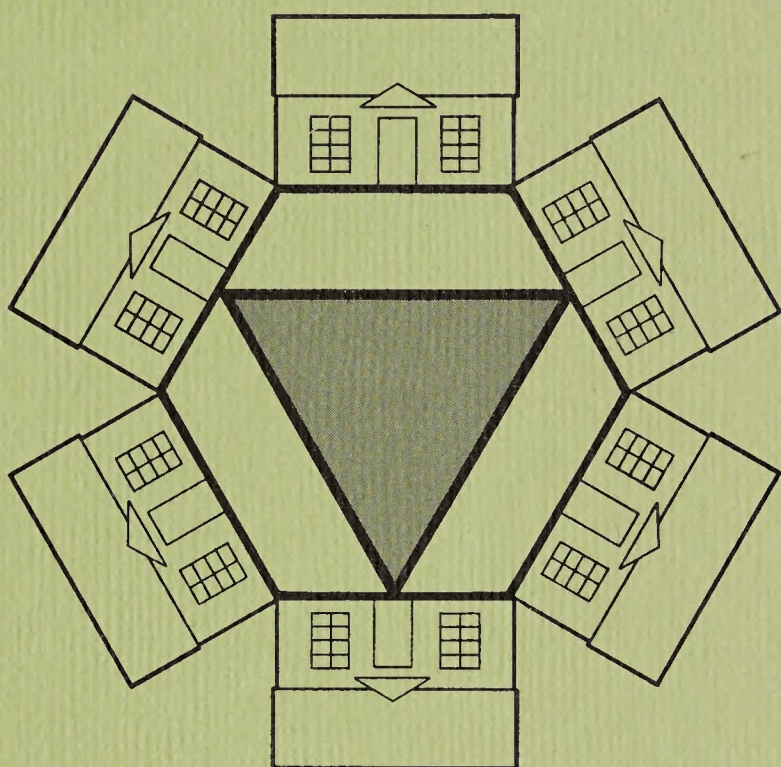
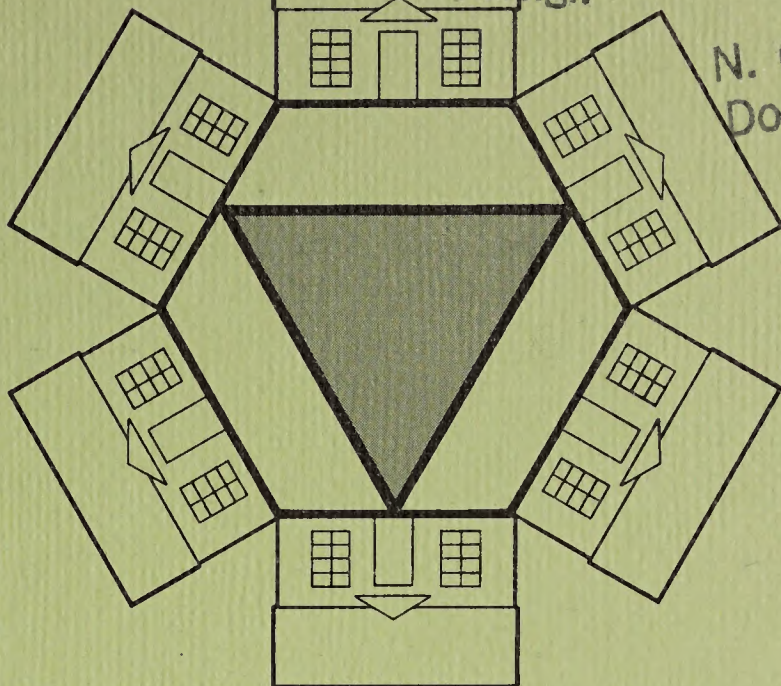


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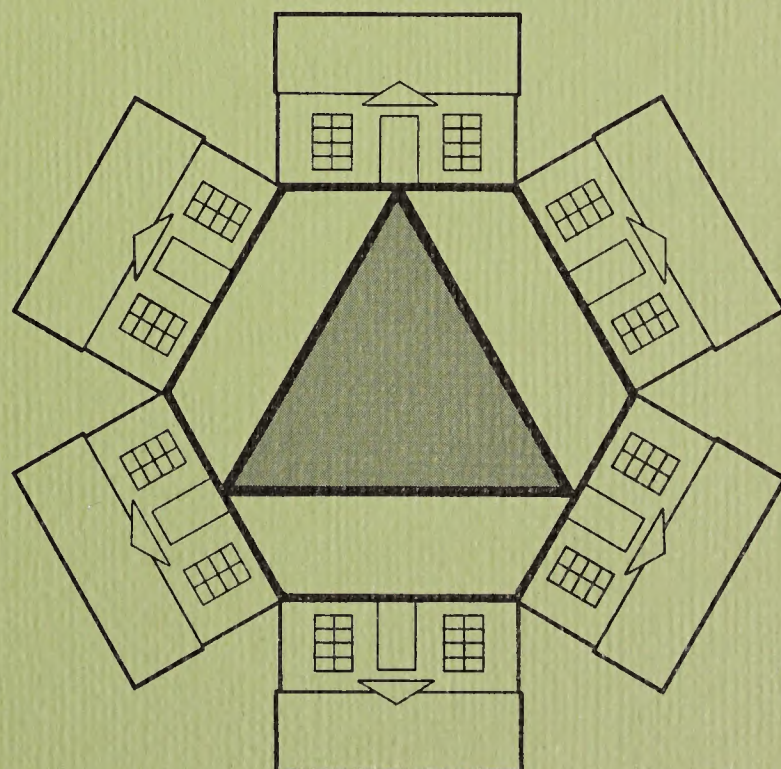
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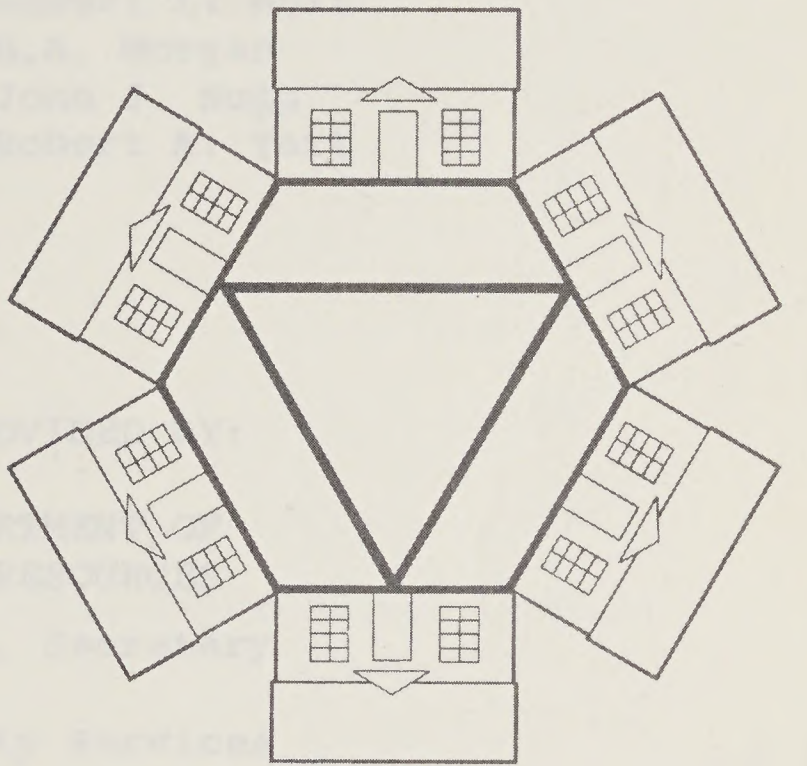
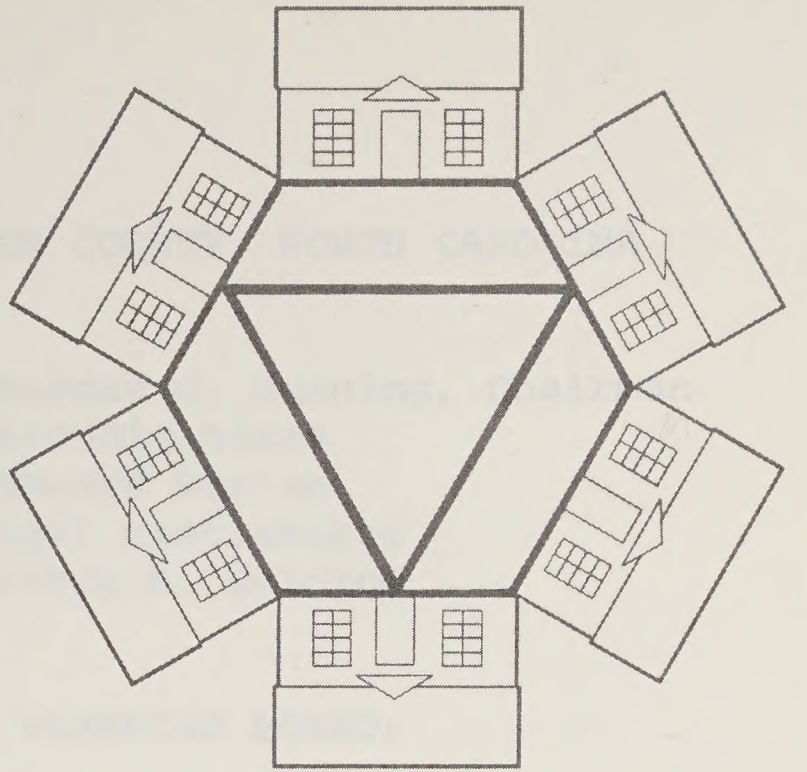


HOUSING STUDY

JOHNSTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

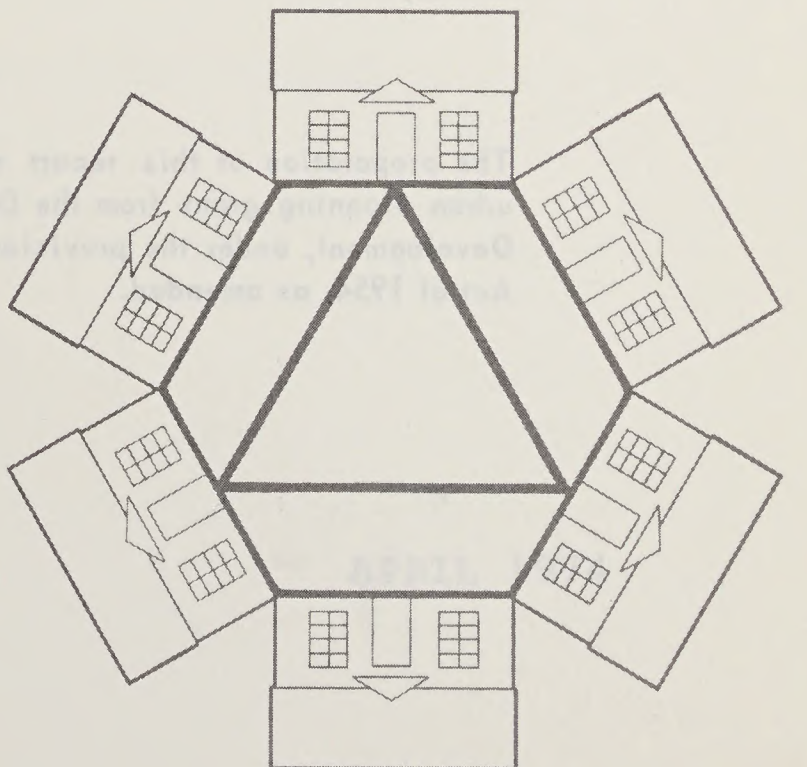


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HOUSING STUDY

JOHNSTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



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INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to many people who assisted in the preparation of this report. The Johnston County Housing Task, formed by the Johnston County Planning Board to get as wide representation of views as possible in regard to housing in the county, met several times in the summer and fall of 1973. Names of Task Force members and their affiliation can be found in the appendix. Especially conscientious in attending meetings and offering suggestions were Leon Powell, Paul Keller, James Griffin, and Cameron Garris.

Special note should also be made of assistance from David Stanaland, who arranged for meeting facilities and has acted as general technical assistant and advisor to the Johnston County Planning Board.

Assistance from the Triangle "J" Council of Governments in providing some of the background data is gratefully acknowledged, and particularly for assistance from Mrs. Jean Beal, who attended and contributed to all the task force meetings.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this report is to acquaint Johnston County Commissioners and other interested county residents with background information on the housing situation in the county, and to make recommendations on how housing conditions can be improved.

Since the scope of this study is limited, no original research or data collection has been attempted. Instead, an effort has been made to summarize statistical data related to housing in Johnston County which is already available. The primary source of data is, of course, the U.S. Census of Housing; however a number of additional sources are utilized including housing and general planning reports for communities within the county, data gathered for and by the State Planning Division, and observations made by housing task force members.

Importance of Good Housing to Johnston County

Housing is more than just a way of sheltering oneself or one's family against the elements. Since much of the family's time is spent in their dwelling unit, it is an important part of their total living environment. With all of the attention being focused today on ecology and man's environment, people are beginning to realize more and more that this world we live in, both natural and manmade, is a complex system of interdependent variables. It is not difficult to understand how man's environment can help shape his attitudes, goals and aspirations. If a family is unable to find decent sanitary housing, and instead is relegated to living in a rural or urban slum, it cannot help but be affected physically, socially, and emotionally. This, in turn, is likely to affect the children, their ability to study and do well in school, and hence to help perpetuate the cycle of poverty of which poor housing is only one manifestation.

Therefore, when studying the needs and opportunities for improving the housing situation in Johnston County, these needs and opportunities should not be viewed in the narrow context of "shelter," but should be considered a means of improving county residents' total living environment and enhancing their chances of success in entering the economic mainstream of the community. Poor housing is a reflection of poverty, and although much has been said and written about the cycle of poverty and where it can best be broken, undoubtedly a number of measures are necessary including better educational and job opportunities as well as better housing. The pride and security that go along with living in a safe, sanitary dwelling can help all Johnston County residents in achieving the satisfaction of knowing they are living in the type of environment conducive to rearing children, as well as enriching their own lives.

THE HOUSING SUPPLY IN JOHNSTON COUNTY

Types of Distribution of Housing

The types of housing units in Johnston County and their distribution by town and township in 1970 are shown in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1

TYPES OF HOUSING: JOHNSTON COUNTY AND OTHER UNITS, 1970

	Total Year Round Housing Units	TYPE OF HOUSING UNIT					
		<u>Single-Family</u> Number/Percent		<u>Multi-Family</u> Number/Percent		<u>Mobile Home</u> Number/Percent	
State							
of N.C.	1,618,103	---	82.9	---	11.8	---	5.4
Region J	171,348	128,855	75.2	24,438	20.1	8,055	4.7
Johnston County	20,886	18,513	88.6	1,071	5.1	1,302	6.2
Banner Twp.	1,628	1,344	82.6	238	14.6	39	2.3
Benson	865	645	74.6	215	24.8	8	0.9
Bentonsville Twp.	427	402	94.1	10	2.3	10	2.3
Beulah Twp.	1,296	1,172	90.4	49	3.8	58	4.5
Kenly	494	429	86.8	37	7.5	29	5.9
Boon Hill Twp.	1,362	1,235	90.7	36	2.6	89	6.5
Princeton	348	310	89.1	21	6.0	11	3.2
Clayton Twp.	2,135	1,845	86.4	155	7.3	134	6.3
Clayton	1,080	933	86.4	139	12.9	8	0.7
Cleveland Twp.	433	376	86.8	12	2.8	37	8.5
Elevation Twp.	890	814	91.5	19	2.1	41	4.6
Ingrams Twp.	1,368	1,209	88.4	45	3.3	96	7.0
Four Oaks	391	362	92.6	22	5.6	7	1.8
Meadow Twp.	734	647	88.1	13	1.8	40	5.4
Micro Twp.	499	458	91.8	15	3.0	26	5.2
Micro	123	112	91.1	7	5.7	4	3.3
O'Neals Twp.	1,354	1,232	91.0	22	1.6	89	6.6
Pine Level Twp.	828	732	88.4	61	7.4	61	7.4
Pine Level	356	313	87.9	29	8.1	14	3.9
Pleasant Grove Twp.	835	751	89.9	9	1.1	45	5.4
Selma Twp.	2,280	1,928	84.6	212	9.3	135	5.9
Selma	1,543	1,314	85.2	190	12.3	34	2.2
Smithfield Twp	3,991	3,505	87.8	281	7.0	195	4.9
Smithfield	2,306	1,991	86.3	249	10.8	59	2.6
Wilders Twp.	614	576	92.3	13	2.1	30	4.9
Wilson Mills Twp.	313	285	91.1	6	1.9	21	6.7
Wilson Mills	107	103	96.3	2	1.9	2	1.9

SOURCE: Published and Unpublished 1970 Census of Housing data.

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

In studying Table 1, we can draw the following conclusions concerning housing in the county:

- Single-family units constitute a larger percentage of the Johnston County housing stock than is found in the region or statewide. In 1970, 88.6 percent of dwelling units in the county were single-family type, compared to 82.9 percent statewide. Trends in Johnston County are following those in the state as a whole, however. In 1960, 95.6 percent of the dwellings in Johnston County were the single-family type, and at the same time the statewide figure was 90.6 percent.
- Consistent with the above statement, there are relatively fewer multi-family dwellings in Johnston County than in the region or statewide. Within the county, variations are significant with the largest percentages of multi-family units in the urban areas. Benson has a surprisingly large ratio of multi-family units (24.8 percent), particularly when the corresponding percentages for the next two highest areas of multi-unit concentrations (Clayton and Selma) are only 12.9 and 12.3 percent, respectively. In general, though, the percentage of multi-family units increases as the population of the political subunit increases, with the highest percentages found in incorporated municipalities.
- Mobile homes are relatively more important as a housing resource in Johnston County than in Region "J" or statewide. In terms of absolute numbers, however, Johnston County with 1,302 mobile home units in 1970 was about average in the state where number of units ranged from 99 (Tyrrell County) to 6,293 (Cumberland County). The expansion of mobile homes in Johnston County has been greater than the growth statewide. In 1960, mobile homes constituted only 0.7 percent of the housing stock in Johnston County, while the statewide figure was 1.4 percent. However, by 1970 mobile homes made up 6.2 percent of the county housing stock, while the statewide ratio increased to only 5.4 percent. With respect to mobile home location, we find a trend opposite to that of multi-family dwelling locations. Mobile homes are found primarily in the rural areas of the county and just outside city limits. For example, the largest number in 1970 were located in Smithfield Township (195), but of that total only

59 were within the Town of Smithfield. Percentage wise, the largest concentrations of mobile homes were in small rural townships with Cleveland Township leading (8.5 percent), followed by Pine Level Township (7.4 percent) and Ingrams Township (7.0 percent). Some of the variations are due to the fact that some municipalities (Selma and Benson) do not permit mobile homes within their town limits.

--- Undoubtedly a large number of mobile homes have been introduced into Johnston County since the 1970 Census of Housing was conducted. According to a list compiled by the Johnston County Health Center, there were a total of 53 mobile home parks having ten or more units per park in Johnston County as of July 23, 1973. Many of these parks have been constructed since 1970, and of course many single units have been placed on individual lots in the past few years. More will be said about some of the unique problems and characteristics of mobile homes later in this report.

--- In general, the relative importance of single-family homes in Johnston County is declining, while the relative importance of apartment units and mobile homes is increasing.

Although not really a "type" of housing, public housing units are mentioned in this section of the report to more easily assess their impact compared to the total number of housing units in the county.

There are three active housing authorities operating public housing units in Johnston County. Table 2 below summarizes the types of units operated by each of the authorities.

TABLE 2
PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS: JOHNSTON COUNTY 1973

	<u>BENSON</u>	<u>SMITHFIELD</u>	<u>SELMA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Units in Operation	150	135	183	368
Units under construction	0	0	0	0
Additional units proposed	0	0	0	0
Units designated for elderly only	16*	35	130	181
Additional units occupied by elderly	4	31	-	35

SOURCE: Smithfield, Benson, and Selma Housing Authorities.

*Ten of Benson's 100 new units are designated for elderly only.

HOUSING QUALITY AND CHARACTERISTICS

Determination of housing quality requires more subjective judgments and criteria than that used for examining types of housing by geographic area. It is an easy task to see if a unit is a single-family dwelling or an apartment complex or a mobile home. But how does one determine if a dwelling is "standard quality," or "deteriorating," or "dilapidated?" Although criteria can and have been established to help classify housing by condition, value judgments are bound to creep into the ranking system. This, in large measure, was the reason that the U.S. Bureau of the Census deleted questions on housing quality from the 1970 Census of Housing, and decided to depend instead on objective criteria such as whether or not dwellings had plumbing facilities.

Despite data limitations, it is helpful to look at those data related to housing quality which are available. Characteristics which will be considered include plumbing facilities, overcrowding, rent and value, vacancies and home ownership. Also considered as somewhat broader topics will be the impact of environmental factors on the quality of housing, the quality of rural housing in the county, and the impact that mobile homes are having on Johnston County.

Table 3 shows in tabular form much of the information that will be discussed concerning housing quality and characteristics.

TABLE 3

SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, JOHNSTON COUNTY AND OTHER UNITS: 1970

	Lacking One or More Plumbing Fac. Number	One or Fac. Percent	1.01 + Per- sons Per Rm.		Median		VACANT FOR SALE OR RENT			Owner Occupied %
			No.	%	Rent (\$)	Median Value (\$)	For Sale For			
							Only No.	Rent or rent No.		
State of N.C.		15.6		10.2	59	12,800			8.2	65.4
Region "J"	18,324	10.7	13,411	7.8	75	16,300	1,290	4,227	3.2	58.6
Johnston Co.	3,968	19.0	1,971	9.4	40	10,600	69	637	3.4	59.5
Banner Twp.	381	23.4	127	7.8	--	---	5	86	5.6	55.6
Benson Town	135	15.6	64	7.4	42	10,800	1	45	5.3	48.6
Benton'sville										
Twp.	187	43.8	40	9.4	--	---	1	9	2.3	67.0
Beulah Twp.	398	30.7	116	9.0	--	---	1	45	3.5	56.2
Kenly Town	94	19.0	51	10.3	40	8,700	1	13	2.8	57.4
Boon Hill Twp.	309	22.7	133	9.8	--	---	2	37	2.9	57.2
Princeton Town	32	9.2	28	8.0	43	8,600	2	4	1.7	55.8
Clayton Twp.	412	19.3	207	9.7	--	---	21	61	3.8	61.2
Clayton Town	170	15.7	80	7.4	45	10,800	13	30	4.0	57.2
Cleveland Twp.	106	24.5	59	3.6	--	---	0	11	2.5	58.8
Elevation Twp.	302	33.9	70	7.9	--	---	2	34	4.0	67.1
Ingrams Twp.	332	24.3	92	6.7	--	---	2	31	2.4	65.4
Four Oaks Tn	60	15.3	20	5.1	42	9,300	2	10	3.1	61.3
Meadow Twp.	257	35.0	88	12.0	--	---	0	13	1.8	57.4
Micro Twp.	134	26.8	43	8.6	--	---	3	28	6.2	60.1
Micro Town	17	13.8	2	1.6	--	---	1	4	4.1	61.9
O'Neals Twp.	551	40.7	140	10.3	--	---	2	54	4.1	63.8
Pine Level Twp.	193	23.3	62	7.5	--	---	0	26	3.1	58.9
Pine Level Tn	62	17.4	20	5.6	--	---	0	2	0.6	61.0
Pleasant Grove										
Twp.	227	27.2	65	7.8	--	---	4	8	1.4	64.7
Selma Twp.	453	19.9	205	9.0	--	---	13	55	3.0	36.9
Selma Town	255	16.5	125	8.1	33	10,800	11	37	3.1	54.1
Smithfield Twp	612	15.3	356	8.9	--	---	24	83	2.7	58.4
Smithfield Tn	323	14.0	222	9.6	45	13,200	5	63	2.9	53.4
Wilders Twp	216	35.2	81	13.2	--	---	0	6	1.0	57.3
Wilson Mills										
Twp	111	35.5	38	12.1	--	---	0	9	2.9	64.2
Wilson Mills Tn	48	44.8	14	13.1	--	---	0	3	2.8	72.3

SOURCE: Published and Unpublished 1970 Census of Housing data.

SOURCE: Published and Unpublished 1970 Census of Housing data.

Plumbing Facilities

The closest indicators of housing conditions that we have from the 1970 Census are data on lack of plumbing facilities. The figures cited in Table 2 indicate dwelling units "lacking one or more plumbing facilities." Naturally, this single criterion is not an absolute measure of the suitability of a dwelling as a place to live, but it is the best such indicator available at the present time.

What the figures show is that Johnston County has a higher proportion of dwellings lacking one or more plumbing facilities (19.0 percent) than do either the region (10.7 percent) or the state as a whole (15.6 percent).

Within the county, percentages vary from a low of 9.2 percent in Princeton, to a high of 44.8 percent in Wilson Mills. As would be expected, the higher percentages are found in rural areas, and the lower percentages in urban areas (the exception being Wilson Mills which does not have municipal water or sewer). In absolute numbers, O'Neals Township has the greatest number of units lacking one or more plumbing facilities (551), while Mirco has the least (17). The total for Johnston County is 3,968.

It should be reemphasized that, while there is some correlation between structural conditions and lack of plumbing facilities, it is not necessarily a close correlation. One example should help point out a typical relationship. The Town of Smithfield in 1960 had 1,314 "sound" dwelling units.* Of this total, 1,159 had all plumbing facilities while 155 lacked one or more plumbing facilities. Of the 339 "deteriorating" units,

* U.S. Census of Housing, 1960.

131 had all plumbing facilities and 208 units lacked one or more plumbing facilities. "Dilapidated" units were not broken down further by type of plumbing facility, but it would be safe to assume that most dilapidated units lacked one or more of these facilities.

Overcrowding

The definition of "overcrowding" in residential dwelling units commonly used by federal agencies is those units with over 1.01 persons per room.

A total of 1,971 units of housing in Johnston County, or 9.4 percent of the year-round units, are overcrowded using the above definition. This is better than the statewide proportion of 10.2 percent, but is worse than the Region "J" figure of 7.8 percent.

Within the county, overcrowding is most serious numerically in Smithfield Township (356 units), followed by the Town of Smithfield (222 units), Clayton Township (207 units), and Selma Township (205 units). As a percentage of total year-round housing units in each area, the most serious overcrowding is found in Wilders Township (13.2 percent), Wilson Mills (13.1 percent), Wilson Mills Township (12.1 percent), and Meadow Township (12.0 percent).

Rent and Value

Although housing rent and value data are not readily available at the township level, we can look at these figures for the county and municipalities within Johnston County.

Median rent in Johnston County in 1970 was \$40, which was considerably below the state figure of \$59 and the Region "J" median of \$75. Median rents did not vary too much within the county, ranging from a low of \$33 in Selma to a high of \$45 in Clayton and Smithfield.

Similar to rental amounts, the value of housing in Johnston County ranges below that of the region and state as a whole. The median value of housing units in the county in 1970 was \$10,600, compared to \$16,300 in the region and \$12,800 statewide. Again, the highest value recorded in the county was Smithfield (\$13,200). Lower values were found in Princeton (\$8,600) and Kenly (\$8,700).

Vacancies

Vacancy rates are an important consideration in a housing study since they partially indicate the extent to which the "filtering process" can work, whereby poorer families are able to occupy dwellings vacated by the more affluent as they move into larger more expensive homes. The number of vacancies also helps determine the amount of choice the housing consumer has in locating a dwelling that meets his family's needs and budget constraints. Then too, vacancy rates affect the price of housing consumer must pay, since when supply exceeds demand (particularly in rental units), prices are more likely to stabilize or decrease.

The vacancy rate in Johnston County in 1970 was 3.4 percent, which was somewhat higher than the regional figure of 3.2 percent, but much lower than the statewide rate of 8.2 percent. Rates within the county varied significantly from a low of 0.6 percent in Pine Level (there were only two rental vacancies and no for sale vacancies), to a high of 6.2 percent in Micro Township.

Rental vacancies constituted the major share of total vacancies in the county, as was the case regionwide. There were 637 rental vacancies in Johnston County in 1970 (3.0 percent of total year-round housing units), but only 69 vacant units for sale (0.4 percent of total year-round units). There were no units for sale in several communities, including Cleveland Township, Meadow Township, Pine Level Township, Pine Level, Wilders Township, Wilson Mills Township, and Wilson Mills. The highest number of for sale vacancies (24) were in Smithfield Township, however, only five of those were in the Town of Smithfield itself, reflecting the fact that much of the new growth in Johnston County is occurring outside city limits.

Home Ownership

A large percentage of homes in Johnston County are owner occupied. In 1970, 59.5 percent of the housing units in Johnston County were owner occupied, compared to 58.6 percent in Region "J" and 65.4 percent statewide. There was not much variation in home ownership patterns within the county, with two exceptions. Selma Township had the lowest proportion of home ownership patterns within the county, with two exceptions. Selma Township had the lowest proportion of home ownership with 36.9 percent (although the Town of Selma reported 54.1 percent), and the Town of Wilson Mills had the highest percentage of home ownership with 72.3 percent.

Environmental Factors

It is difficult to consider the matter of housing quality without looking at the environment in which that housing is placed. The environment can be shaped to some extent through governmental

regulations, such as nuisance ordinances and subdivision regulations, in a manner similar to the way in which housing quality itself can be influenced through enforcement of residential building codes and minimum housing codes. Thus, to appreciate the potential for helping to shape the environment, existing environmental problems must be studied and understood.

Environmental blight is an important aspect of a housing study merely because without the proper neighborhood environmental housing quality is much more likely to become substandard in the future, if it isn't already deteriorating. Simply stated, environmental blight is a factor, or combination of factors, which tends to downgrade neighborhood quality and general "livability" of a residential area. When poor environmental conditions exist, residents are less likely to care about the appearance and maintenance of their property, property values fall, and general neighborhood decay sets in. Environmental problems in Johnston County are not unlike those in most North Carolina communities; they include building on poor soils, flooding and poor drainage, incompatible land uses in proximity to one another, unpaved roads, abandoned structures, and trash and debris.

Soil conditions affect housing and residential neighborhood quality in a number ways. First, to consider is the building site itself. If houses are built on soils with undesirable characteristics, foundations crack, walls and floors sag, and the houses quickly deteriorate in value, utility and aesthetics.

Also, the effect of soils on suitable operation of septic tanks must be considered. According to the 1970 Census of Housing, 10,839 of Johnston County's 20,886 year-round housing units (51.9 percent) used septic tanks or cesspools as a means of sewage

disposal. There have been many more septic tanks installed since that time; however, it is unknown if the percentage of units using septic tanks has changed appreciably. The important factor to be brought out is that there are thousands of septic tanks in the county, and many of them are operating ineffectively if at all. The magnitude of this problem was brought out vividly in the west Smithfield area in recent months, where an expensive sewer system will have to be installed as payment for the mistake of using septic tanks where soils were not suitable for such use. How do inoperative septic tanks affect neighborhood quality? Anyone who has visited or lived in such an area can attest that prevailing odors do in fact degrade living quality of the area. New laws are in effect to more closely supervise the installation of septic tanks, but this in itself will not solve the problem, largely because adequate soils data are not available countywide to evaluate areas of potential septic tank problems.

Flooding and poor surface water drainage are also related to soil types and capabilities. Flooding is not a result of soil type, per se, but the type of soil found in a particular area can be indicative of periodic flooding. Large areas of Johnston County lie within the Neuse River floodplain, and considerable development in Smithfield has already occurred in that floodplain. Periodic flooding results not only in tangible property damage and losses, but also results in devaluation of an area as a desirable location to build or buy a house. This, in turn, can influence property owners to not maintain their dwellings satisfactorily, thereby leading to general neighborhood decline.

Poor drainage can be the result of several factors including topography, level of water table, geology, and type of soil. This condition is found in Johnston County, particularly in the Kenly area. Poor drainage degrades residential neighborhood quality by: 1) affecting the micro climate of the area, 2) making vector (insect) control difficult, 3) making outdoor activities, such as children play, difficult, and 4) increasing the likelihood that septic tank systems will not function properly. Poor drainage can be corrected in most instances, however it can be expensive, particularly in very flat areas. The best solution to this problem is to anticipate it, and to initially construct proper drainage facilities for the site being developed. In some instances, knowledge of potential drainage problems can keep a site from being developed, thereby saving the cost of expensive drainage improvements in the future.

Incompatible land uses in close proximity to one another is an environmental problem in many communities, particularly those which have not enacted land use controls such as zoning. Proximity of housing to railroads and major highways creates problems of noise, fumes, and sometimes dust. Frequently lack of adequate planning and setback requirements allows structures to be built too close to an existing roadway, and when that roadway is widened in the future it removes one important buffer - distance - from between the house and the roadway. An example of this problem in Johnston County is the proposed widening of U.S. 301 in Smithfield north of Market Street. The homes in this area would be very adversely affected if half of their front yards were removed.

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Other examples of incompatible land uses adjacent to one another can be found in every Johnston County community, both urban and rural. These problems include commercial and industrial encroachment into residential neighborhoods (and vice versa) and lack of adequate buffers between residences and other land uses.

Unpaved roads are another factor which affect residential quality. Mud, dust, and potholes all aggravate what should be pleasant journeys to and from a neighborhood. Dust collects on houses giving them a shabby appearance. Attention to this matter is particularly important and timely since, after November 1, 1973, a new policy adopted by the state Secondary Roads Council takes effect. This policy is that no streets in residential areas with subdivision characteristics will be accepted into the state system for maintenance unless they are paved and meet state highway standards. Thus, subdivisions with unpaved streets will not only have a negative environmental factor, but local residents will have to bear the cost of street maintenance, unless the street is maintained by a municipality.

Abandoned dilapidated structures are also detrimental to environmental quality. They are unsightly as well as being unsafe for children who might be playing in or near them. Frequently they provide refuge for mice, rats, and other vermin. The more densely settled an area is, the more obnoxious abandoned structures become.

Accumulation of tall weeds, trash, and debris in vacant lots adversely affects residential environments for both aesthetic and public health reasons. Besides being unsightly, trash and debris harbor rodents and can emit insect attracting odors. This type of environmental nuisance should be controlled to the extent possible.

Rural Housing

Much of the poorest housing in this country and in North Carolina is located in rural areas, and the situation in Johnston County is no exception. This situation prompted an in-depth study of rural housing problems in the region by the Triangle "J" Council of Governments.*

The Triangle "J" rural housing study addresses itself to answering the following pertinent questions: 1) what are the dimensions of the rural housing problems?, 2) who lives in substandard rural housing?, 3) what solutions are there to these problems?, 4) how much has been done with the available tools?, 5) why hasn't performance been better?, and 6) what can be done to help rural people who need better housing? Without going into detail on the study's findings, some summary observations are possible.

Less than half of the region's 170,000 dwelling units are located in rural areas, but two-thirds of its 25,000 substandard units (lacking adequate plumbing facilities or overcrowded) are located outside the corporate limits of its larger cities - Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, and Sanford. In these urban areas, one-tenth of the units are substandard; in rural Region "J" (including all of Johnston County**), one of four dwelling units is substandard. Johnston County contains 32 percent of the substandard rural housing in the region (compared to Wake's 27 percent, Chatham 18 percent, Orange 10 percent, Durham 7 percent, and Lee 6 percent).

Residents of substandard rural housing are primarily old people, poor people, and black people. The problem is particularly acute in elderly household, where nearly 40 percent of the substandard units are occupied by low-income persons 65 years of age and older who own their own homes.

*The information on rural housing in Johnston County is from "Planning Bulletin No. 3: Housing Problems in the Triangle "J" Region and Prospects for Their Solution," Triangle "J" COG, June 1973.

**Criteria for delineating "rural" areas was 10,000 population maximum for receiving Farmers Home Administration assistance.

Efforts have been made at local, state, and national levels to help solve rural housing problems. Local efforts have included construction of public housing units and advising people, primarily through social service agencies, who ask for help. Housing assistance from the State of North Carolina has been limited to advice and planning/technical assistance to local governments. From the federal level, most of the assistance has been from Farmers Home Administration programs, and it is likely that most new financial assistance will come from this source.

Although Farmers Home Administration programs hold the most promise for improving the rural housing stock, current levels of performance fall far short of meeting the needs. There are 11,000 families in rural Region "J" living in substandard housing who could qualify for assistance, but Farmers Home Administration is reaching only about 300 per year. This is due in part to staff limitations in the FHA operation. Other obstacles include lack of programs to help those with the greatest need - families with incomes under \$3,000 per year - and the fact that low density scattered housing does not lend itself to large scale assistance programs.

Mobile Homes

A very important part of the housing picture in Johnston County is the rapid growth of mobile homes as a significant portion of the total housing market. As mentioned previously, the expansion of mobile homes in Johnston County has been greater than the growth statewide. In 1960, mobile homes constituted only 0.7 percent of the housing stock in Johnston County, while the statewide figure was 1.4 percent. However, by 1970 mobile homes constituted 6.2 percent of the county housing stock, while the statewide ratio increased to only 5.4 percent. Information on locations of mobile homes within Johnston

County is limited to 1970 census data which was described earlier in the report. Updated information on mobile home parks in the county will be available in the near future.* It should be realized, though, that many mobile homes are located outside of mobile home parks on individual lots,** which means that additional controls over mobile home parks will not solve all the problems commonly associated with mobile homes.

Why has the expansion of mobile homes been so rapid, and who lives in mobile homes? The skyrocketing costs of conventional housing is well documented and will not be belabored in this study. Suffice it to say that most people who purchase mobile homes are doing so simply because they cannot afford home ownership or a conventional dwelling. Mobile home families in the Triangle (Wake, Orange, Durham) regions are similar to those nationwide, i.e., young, small, and white, although a higher percentage of mobile homes in the Research Triangle area are occupied by blacks (9 percent compared with 2.4 percent nationally), and black households are somewhat larger than white households (3.0 persons per unit compared with 2.64).

How much does it cost to live in a mobile home? Costs involved in the ownership of a new mobile home include initial purchase price, sales tax, North Carolina State Motor Vehicle title registration fee, financing costs, property taxes, comprehensive insurance coverage (required by lenders), site rental (unless site is owned), and utilities. There are no closing costs associated with new mobile home

*The Triangle "J" COG is expanding its study "Mobile Homes as a Housing Resource in the Research Triangle Region" to include Johnston County. Meanwhile, many of the general observations in this report concerning mobile homes are extracted from the current Triangle "J" study, which is specifically oriented towards Wake, Durham, and Orange Counties.

**The Triangle "J" study reports that 60 percent of mobile homes in Wake, Orange, and Durham Counties are located in "parks" of three or more units.

purchases. According to the Triangle "J" study, with the most favorable financing provided, it costs \$153.76 per month (including utilities) in this area to live in the typical new mobile home on a rented site in a mobile home park of good quality. With less favorable, but more usual financing, it will cost \$181.50 per month for the same set-up. This means a minimum annual income ranging between \$7,400 and \$8,700 will be required if the mobile home owner is not to spend an excessive proportion of his income for shelter and utilities. Under these circumstances, it is generally more economical for him to live in a mobile home than it would be in a new apartment at going market rentals. Monthly costs are about the same, but there is an equity build-up in the mobile home. Thus, while new mobile homes serve the needs of modest income families, they cannot be afforded by low-income segments of the population.

Mobile homes may be taxed as personal property or as real property in North Carolina. Johnston County taxes them as personal property unless a conventionally constructed room is attached to them. Problems commonly associated with taxing of mobile homes include possible revenue losses resulting from (1) the absence of reliable established reporting procedures to assure that all mobiles are listed, and (2) the under-assessment of mobile home park spaces. In addition to problems of listing and assessment, there are a variety of problems associated with collection that arise from mobility of the units. There is no requirement or provision for the notification of tax offices, which may be left with unpaid bills and no forwarding address. Tax officials have no way of knowing when a mobile leaves, or even if it has left until the tax bills are returned.

Regulation of mobile homes falls into three broad categories: 1) structural regulations, 2) health and safety regulations, and 3) land use controls.

For years structural deficiencies have been cited as the chief complaint against mobile homes as a housing form. The use of highly combustible building materials, prevalence of faulty wiring, and poor design resulted in excessive fire risk. Mobiles were also found to be particularly hazardous in high winds. The need for mobile home construction regulations was first addressed by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1969. At the request of the mobile home industry, legislation was enacted requiring that all mobile homes manufactured after July 1, 1970, and sold or offered for sale in North Carolina be manufactured in accordance with Mobile Home Standard All9.1. The 1971 General Assembly strengthened the law by making it mandatory that all mobiles manufactured after September 1, 1971, and sold or offered for sale in North Carolina exhibit a "label of compliance" with the Mobile Home Standard All9.1 from an independent testing agency approved and licensed by the State Building Code Council. Units bearing this label are preempted from local inspection on the inside. For units manufactured before September 1, 1971, the dealer or seller must supply a certificate of origin stating the date of manufacture. Such units are subject to local inspection, however, since there is no building inspector in Johnston County, there is no inspection.

In regard to health and safety regulations, mobile homes are subject to the same basic state and local regulations as other dwellings, including protective controls over 1) electric wiring and connections, 2) water supply, and 3) sewage disposal. A lesser degree of compliance and difficulty in securing compliance are more frequent with mobiles than conventional housing. Electrical inspections are performed by inspectors employed by local governments. All mobiles manufactured since January 1, 1966, must comply with the National Electrical Code. As noted before, mobiles in compliance

with the State Mobile Home Code need no further inside inspection, but all mobiles must be checked for proper outside connections and grounding. Enforcement of electrical regulations presents little difficulty where new connections with separate billing are required. Power companies will not furnish electricity until the unit has been approved by the local inspector. In some cases, however, mobiles locate on lots adjoining existing dwellings (frequently occupied by relatives) and simply connect to an existing line. Local officials have no reliable means of detecting their arrival for electrical inspection or other purposes.

Most mobile home parks are located beyond the service areas of public water supplies and sewage disposal. Mobiles situated on individual lots are even less likely to have access to public water and sewer lines. State regulations, enforced primarily at the local level by sanitarians in county health departments, govern private sewage disposal and water supply systems for all types of dwellings, including mobiles. Counties may adopt more stringent requirements than basic state minimums. The Johnston County Health Department requires 15,000 square feet minimum lot size for septic tanks when community water is available, and 20,000 square feet when individual wells are used. The Johnston County Sanitarian has expressed concern over Wake County's recent decision to require 30,000 square foot minimum lot sizes for septic tanks. He feels as though this will flood the Clayton area (where much of the soil is not suitable for septic tanks) with mobiles that may otherwise locate in Wake County.

One factor which may help the septic tank problem is an act of the 1973 General Assembly which took effect October 1, 1973. This Act greatly strengthens the powers of local health agencies to control sewage disposal from mobile homes or other dwellings in areas

not served by either a public or a community sewage disposal system (which are adequately regulated elsewhere in the General Statutes). The Act requires that an improvements permit be secured from the local health department before commencing construction of a dwelling or moving either a mobile home or dwelling onto a site other than in a mobile home park. Field inspection and tests of the site are required before this permit can be issued. Even then the dwelling or mobile home cannot be occupied until the department determines that its sewage disposal system (septic tank or otherwise) has been properly installed. In that event the department is to issue a certificate of completion. To reenforce these provisions, the Act provides that no other permit for construction on a conventional dwelling can be issued until the improvements permit has been issued; and no permit for electrical or other construction work on a mobile home or for location on a particular site can be issued until a certificate of completion has been issued. Furthermore, no electricity can be supplied to the structure until the local electrical inspector has certified to the company that the above requirements have been met. Finally, mobile home dealers are required to post a warning notice concerning these provisions at a conspicuous place in their sales offices and to supply each purchaser with a summary of the Act prepared by state health officials. One vexing problem remains in Johnston County, however. Effective operation of a septic tank depends very much on the type of soil it drains into. Since most of Johnston County has not yet had a detailed soil survey undertaken, septic tank permits are more likely to be issued for areas not suitable for this type sewage disposal.

Land use controls are the third type of general regulation imposed on mobile homes. At least in theory, the basic justification for land use controls exercised by local governments, chief among

which is the practice of zoning, is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community at large and to safeguard the quality of the environment. It is widely recognized, however, that zoning today is excessively used as a device to exclude often disliked but essential (generally lower cost) residential uses. This is especially true of mobile home zoning, until recently a highly effective and much used exclusionary device.

In most of the nation, including this Region, the development of mobile home zoning regulations has been characterized by "panic action" and discrimination. This reflects both an honest sense of bewilderment and perplexity in the face of the tremendous influx of this new type of housing and the associated effects of this phenomenon as well as hostility rooted in bias and prejudice. The hostility is partly based on lingering unfavorable impressions of unsightly trailer parks of past years (not all of which have disappeared), partly on inadequate or erroneous information about today's mobile homes and their occupants, and partly on plain dislike and distrust of unconventional houses and people who live in them.

Here and elsewhere, most mobile home zoning regulations lack consistency and, in some cases, logic. Generally, they either 1) exclude mobiles entirely (effectively, if not literally); 2) accept mobiles and/or parks only as conditional uses; or 3) relegate them to the least desirable sections. In some localities (especially Orange County in this Region), the rapid, uncontrolled influx of mobile homes to unzoned rural areas has been an impetus for zoning pressures where zoning has been opposed in the past.

Until recently the courts have upheld the generally restrictive mobile home zoning practices in most localities. During the last several years, however, legal decisions in North Carolina and

elsewhere have reflected a shift in the courts' attitudes. The courts appear to be moving in the direction of erasing the distinctions in zoning ordinances between mobile, modular, and conventional housing.

Johnston County currently does not exercise any zoning or subdivision controls. However, five municipalities within the county have ordinances which either exclude mobile homes entirely, or control their locations. The Towns of Selma, Benson, and Four Oaks prohibit mobile homes in their town limits. Clayton permits them in two existing parks within the town limits, and outside the town within its extra-territorial jurisdiction it allows mobile homes on individual lots in the R-20 zone and in mobile home parks in the R-15 zone. Smithfield allows mobile homes on individual lots and in parks in the R-20A and R-6 zone districts. Kenly is now in the process of writing a zoning ordinance, and how they will treat mobile homes is unknown at this time.

Mobile home parks themselves can be regulated through a mobile home ordinance, without having to adopt a zoning ordinance. Such a mobile home ordinance could control park standards such as minimum lot sizes, street widths, open space, etc., although it would not control the locations of parks, per se.

THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING

In order to project future housing demand and housing needs, it is necessary to perform complex empirical analyses based on certain theoretical principals that govern economic operations of housing markets. A detailed analysis of this type for Johnston County is outside the scope of this study. However, since there are correlations between families with certain characteristics and their particular housing needs, some subjective determinations of housing needs and demand can be inferred from looking at population and household characteristics. Since the need of families which can easily afford conventionally financed houses will probably continue to be met through the private housing market mechanism (supply and demand), this analysis will focus on those households which typically require some kind of public assistance if they are to live in "standard" housing.

According to a recent report, the variance in both substandard housing and in overcrowded dwellings can be explained by four variables: median family income, the proportion of households containing six or more persons, the percent of households with heads aged 65 or over, and the percent of nonwhite families. These can be referred to as "high risk population." The report goes on to say that, "The picture that emerges.....is one of a preponderance of low-income, large and black families occupying the worst housing in the state. This is not to say that smaller or white families can always serve adequate housing; it simply means that a number of social disadvantages occur together and serve to compound the housing problems of the poor."*

*Howard J. Sumka and Michael A. Stegman, The Housing Outlook in North Carolina: Projections to 1980, N.C. State Planning Division, June '72.

With these relationships in mind, some impressions of housing needs can be derived by considering trends in these key social variables.

Median family income in Johnston County in 1970 was \$6,023, an increase of 141 percent over the 1960 figure of \$2,469.* Although the rate of increase was very high during the 1960-70 decade, levels still lagged behind statewide figures of \$7,774 in 1970 (a 50.9 percent increase from the 1960 state median family income of \$3,956). Johnston County families (24.8 percent) had incomes below the poverty level in 1970, compared to 16.3 percent statewide.** Of Johnston County's 16,566 families in 1970, 5,435 or 32.8 percent had incomes under \$4,000 per year, making it nearly impossible for them to improve their housing or buy better housing. An additional 5,444 families had incomes ranging from \$4,000 to \$7,999 per year. These moderate income families, too, are finding it increasingly difficult to locate suitable housing at a price they can afford to pay. Thus, it might be said that only about one-third of Johnston County families can afford suitable housing without some kind of assistance.

Household size is also an important indicator, since a larger family will have to allocate a greater percentage of its disposable income for housing to avoid overcrowding. Although the number of housing units with six persons or more in Johnston County decreased from 2,763 in 1960 to 1,896 in 1970, there remains a substantial number of large households which have special housing needs.

*Unless otherwise noted, all figures are from published U.S. Bureau of the Census reports.

**"Poverty level" varies with size of family, sex of head, and by farm and nonfarm residence. The level in 1970 for a nonfarm family of four with male head was \$3,745.

The number of elderly persons in Johnston County has increased significantly over the past two decades, from 3,310 in 1950, to 4,395 in 1960, to 5,350 in 1970. This has been during a time frame when the total county population was decreasing, so we find the percentage increase even more dramatic, from 5.0 percent of the county population in 1950, to 7.0 percent in 1960, to 8.7 percent in 1970. In 1970, 2,440 people or 13.9 percent of persons whose income was below the poverty level were over 65 years of age; thus the elderly had almost twice their "share" of poverty. In addition, only 77.1 percent of those elderly below the poverty level were receiving Social Security income. Thus, the elderly in Johnston County are going to have to receive a growing amount of public attention if their housing needs, as well as other needs, are going to be met.

The fourth variable associated with substandard housing is race. The nonwhite (which essentially is black) population in Johnston County has decreased slightly over the past two decades, from 14,320 in 1950 to 13,071 in 1970, but the proportion of blacks has remained slightly over 20 percent (21.7 percent in 1950, 22.4 percent in 1960, and 21.2 percent in 1970). Like the elderly, blacks in Johnston County have more than their share of poverty.* Of the 2,714 black families in Johnston County, nearly 50 percent (1,333) have annual incomes below \$4,000. Looking at it another way, although black families comprise only 14.6 percent of the total families in the county, they constitute 24.5 percent of the families whose incomes are below \$4,000. When you add to this figure the 975 black families whose incomes range between \$4,000 and \$7,999, you have remaining only 406 families, or 14.9 percent of the total number of black families, who can afford some type of unsubsidized housing.

*As a footnote, it is interesting to note that of the county's 5,350 elderly persons, 939 or 17.5 percent are nonwhite. So, although blacks have more than their "share" of poverty, they have less than their share of longevity.

What we have after looking at all these statistics is not a quantitative estimate of housing demand in Johnston County, but a realization that the existing housing supply, including the 368 public housing units, 394 Farmers Home Administration Section 502 home loans, and other assisted housing, can in no way meet the housing needs of Johnston County residents. The needs of the elderly are particularly acute. One Johnston County housing authority official has stated that he could fill all his units with elderly and still not satisfy local needs for low-income elderly housing. Although the analysis is subjective, it is plain to see that more needs to be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations for improving housing conditions in Johnston County are an outgrowth of several meetings and many hours of discussion involving the Johnston County Housing Task Force. Some of the recommendations which follow were not discussed in detail at task force meetings, but they may have been alluded to, or may be necessary as prerequisites for the more detailed recommendations which follow, and which were discussed in greater depth during task force meetings.

The recommendations which follow are not necessarily arranged in order of importance; however, the numbered sequence does follow a logical sequence to help ensure that programs are not developed haphazardly, but rather can be implemented so that the knowledge and/or facilities developed for one can be used as a building block or stepping stone for the next.

The really important lesson to be learned is that housing problems are not an isolated condition which can be solved in a piecemeal manner. Housing is an indivisible part of the entire community fabric, and to improve it you must improve the entire community development process. With this important thought in mind, we will now look at specific recommendations, and comment on each one as we proceed.

RECOMMENDATION 1: THE COUNTY SHOULD INITIATE A COMPREHENSIVE
PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY (COUNTY) DEVELOPMENT

COMMENT: This recommendation may seem at first glance to be only peripherally related to improved housing in Johnston County, but in fact it is the most basic and necessary requirement if all the recommendations that follow are to be integrated into a fully coordinated program. Without a comprehensive planning and management program efforts towards improving housing conditions in the county will be piecemeal at best, and at worst conflicting and counterproductive.

County government is more complex today than ever before, and the demands on elected leaders are becoming more diverse and intensive. County commissioners meetings have become longer and more frequent just to keep up with mounting needs for new and better services, without even having the time to plan ahead as to what services and facilities will be needed five or ten years from now. The county school board has embarked on a long range school planning program and the planning board is studying public facilities in the county as well as housing, but these planning programs must be coordinated along with all the other management and service functions of county government to ensure that priorities and allocation of resources are based on sound planning and management principles, and not as a reaction to a crisis situation.

Comprehensive planning and management is not mysterious or overly complex. It is simply a process whereby the county identifies its goals (including its goals for good housing), determines what obstacles need to be overcome, or potentials taken advantage of, to achieve these goals, devises programs to solve problems and take advantage of potentials and opportunities, and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of these programs in terms of how well they are achieving the goals. This process is sometimes referred to as "management by objective" or "program budgeting." It is simple in concept, and

more cities and counties are embracing the concept every year. But it takes professional management guidance to keep such a program going, particularly in coordinating interdepartmental programs and in monitoring progress towards stated objectives.

Johnston County commissioners have recently announced their intention of hiring a county administrator. This action is a step in the right direction, and will help provide the framework needed to embark on a comprehensive planning and management program. Hiring a full-time county planner to assist an administrator in long range county planning, particularly for critical facilities such as water and sewer, would also help achieve a meaningful program.

RECOMMENDATION 2: HOUSING GOALS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF BROADER COUNTY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

COMMENT: Part of the comprehensive planning and management process (or community development process, if you prefer) is the formulation of goals and objectives. Goals are sometimes established as the first step of the process, but it is frequently more desirable to first inventory trends, problems and potentials in the community, rank them according to priority importance, and then to formulate goals addressing high priority needs. Housing goals would be just one portion of the county's set of goals. For example, a housing goal might be "To give each housing consumer the opportunity to live in a safe and sanitary dwelling." Then, more specific objectives or program would be enumerated to help achieve that goal.

Johnston County has already taken a giant step towards this goal formulation process through the Johnston County Forum. Through this kind of in-depth introspection, citizens are able to reflect on basic needs of society in general, and their community in particular, and to reiterate those needs in terms of community goals. Hopefully the forum will be just the first step in the iteration of county goals.

RECOMMENDATION 3: A LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTY SHOULD BE PREPARED AND FORMALLY ADOPTED AS A POLICY DOCUMENT

COMMENT: A land development plan is a necessary prerequisite for some of the recommendations which follow, particularly the zoning ordinance and a comprehensive water and sewer program. At least one recent court case in North Carolina has established the doctrine that a zoning ordinance must be based on a previously adopted land development plan. Water and sewer extensions are a powerful tool for implementing the plan, but without a plan such utility extensions may be more detrimental than helpful. A land development plan is also very useful for people in the housing field, particularly realtors and financial institutions, since it gives them some idea of how land in a certain area is likely to develop and if it is the best location for a housing development.

The Triangle "J" Council of Governments is now expanding its regional land use guide to include Johnston County. When this is completed it can serve as a general land development guide for the county, and if desired the county can supplement it with more detailed studies and plans at a later date. Also, Triangle "J" is studying the feasibility of a computerized land use inventory system which could be made operational as part of the county's revaluation program. Such an information system would be valuable for on-going planning efforts in the county.

RECOMMENDATION 4: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION TO IMPROVE HOUSING SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED WITHIN A REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE FRAMEWORK

COMMENT: Many public service objectives can be more readily attained through joint cooperative efforts between governmental units and agencies than they can through a single effort. There are two basic reasons for this: first, management and service experiences can be shared, and problems experienced by one unit can be avoided by another; also one unit may have a special expertise which can be passed on to another unit. Second, more and more federal (and state) grant programs are requiring a regional approach to the solution of common problems, which makes sense particularly when such large expenditures as those for sophisticated waterwaste treatment plants are involved where individual systems are so much more costly and inefficient than a regional system.

In regard to housing, Johnston County has at least two opportunities to take advantage of intergovernmental programs. One of these, the Triangle Housing Development Corporation, has already been endorsed and supported financially by the county. The other, the Eastern Carolina Housing Authority, has not been utilized by the county. Both of these programs are discussed in other recommendations which follow.

State programs to help ease the housing crisis in North Carolina have generally been a flop. The North Carolina Housing Corporation, created in 1969 to sell bonds and make mortgage money available, was unable to market the bonds and was dissolved by the 1973 General Assembly. A new effort was made by the 1974 General Assembly to put \$8 million from state tax collections into a special reserve fund that would allow a new state housing finance agency to sell up to \$100 million in bonds. The bond money would provide low-interest home

mortgages to North Carolina families with incomes under \$8,000 a year who can't obtain a mortgage on the commercial market. The thrust of the program would be to promote ownership of single-family homes in rural areas. The proposal was a partial success in that \$4 million was allocated for this purpose. These efforts to make additional mortgage money available should receive continuing support from Johnston County officials.

RECOMMENDATION 5: THE JOHNSTON COUNTY DETAILED SOIL SURVEY SHOULD BE COMPLETED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

COMMENT: Strictly in terms of a logical sequence of events which these recommendations are attempting to show, the soil survey should be completed before the land development plan, and should be a major basis of planning recommendations. However, in practical terms, the land use plan should be completed as soon as possible with the best available data since the lead time necessary to complete the soil survey would be three to four years. Some areas of the county are already mapped (notably the Smithfield-Selma area, Kenly, and Princeton) and can be input to the development plan. When the soil survey is completed it could be used to refine the plan.

In terms of priorities, most task force members felt that completion of the soil survey should be near or at the top. Septic tank failures and all their related costs, inconvenience, and aggravation (not to mention odors) have become a way of life in Johnston County. This should never have happened in the first place, and it should not be allowed to continue. Septic tanks should not be allowed where soil conditions cannot support such a waste disposal system. Percolation tests are not enough because they are not accurate indicators during dry seasons. Soils information is needed as a basis for issuing septic tank permits.

Johnston County officials have been reluctant to support the soil survey because of the cost involved. Detailed soils information is expensive, but how much is the West Smithfield wastewater collection system going to cost? The need for such a corrective system could have been avoided through proper planning, which requires a soil survey. Need for the survey is acute, and alternatives for meeting this need which do not require large sums of money are available to the county commissioners. The county could hire its own soil scientist, full-time or part-time, to work with the Soil Conservation Service and county sanitarian in mapping those areas of immediate critical concern, which would include Clayton and Benson. The amount of financial support given by the county would determine the rate at which mapping could be completed, and individual towns might be willing to contribute to the cost of mapping their planning areas.

RECOMMENDATION 6: POSITIVE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO HELP COUNTY RESIDENTS INCREASE THEIR INCOMES THROUGH HIGHER PAYING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

COMMENT: It is a simple fact of life that most substandard housing is a result of people living in it not being able to afford anything better. In other words, so long as a market (poor people) exists for cheap (substandard) housing, that housing will continue to exist. Poverty abounds in Johnston County. In 1970, 24.8 percent of Johnston County families had incomes below the poverty level; 32.8 percent had incomes below \$4,000 per year, making it nearly impossible for them to improve their housing or buy better housing even with the help of federal government programs.

The real key to providing better housing on a large scale basis is to provide better job opportunities so people can participate in the regular housing market. Recently an industrial firm which pays good wages was discouraged from locating in Johnston County. This is unfortunate in light of the widespread poverty in this area. True, the county must take a hard look at future industrial development in terms of the impact it will have on the environment and public services, particularly water and sewer systems, but it is unfortunate that only when this particular higher paying industry was involved was so much concern expressed over public services and their ability to support a new industry.

The Johnston County Planning Board has recently completed a study of manufacturing firms and wage scales in Johnston County, comparing them with surrounding counties and statewide figures. This study should be used to help chart some goals for future industrial growth in the county as part of a comprehensive planning and management effort.

RECOMMENDATION 7: A COUNTYWIDE WATER AND SEWER PROGRAM SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER PREPARATION OF A COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

COMMENT: Need for a countywide water and sewer system has been well demonstrated in recent months. Failing septic tanks in West Smithfield and north of Smithfield show the need for a wastewater collection system, and projected water shortages in the Clayton area indicate requirements for an interconnected water distribution system. A Farmers Home Administration County water/sewer study was undertaken for Johnston County in 1968, but it was a cursory study and obviously should be updated. A preliminary engineering report for a Johnston County Water Plan was prepared in 1971, but this report focuses merely on the U.S. 301 corridor from Smithfield to Benson.

Some encouraging actions have been taken recently, however, primarily under the auspices of the Triangle "J" Council of Governments, which includes Johnston County. A Farmers Home Administration funded study is underway to delineate logical water/sewer service areas throughout the six-county region. This study should be completed in 1974. Also, "201" wastewater treatment districts have been delineated is a prerequisite for water pollution control systems (sewage treatment plants) funded by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. These planning efforts will help provide a sound basis for Johnston County to do more detailed engineering studies for a countywide water and sewer system.

RECOMMENDATION 8: MINIMUM LOT SIZES FOR USE WITH SEPTIC TANKS SHOULD BE INCREASED WHERE NECESSARY

COMMENT: The Johnston County Health Department currently requires minimum lot sizes in areas using septic tanks of 10,000 and 15,000 square feet, the former being where a community water system is available. This is not adequate for septic tanks to function properly, particularly where soils are poorly suited for septic tank use. Wake County has recently increased minimum lot sizes for use with septic tanks from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet. This may result in undesirable septic tank development "spilling over" into Johnston County, particularly near Clayton where soils are especially poor for septic tanks.

Minimum lot sizes for septic tanks should be increased where problem soils have been identified. As soils mapping is completed (as hopefully it will be), more precise information will be available on a countywide basis, and perhaps variable minimums could be established according to soil type and characteristics. In fact this could be done now for those areas already mapped.

RECOMMENDATION 9: ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED TO MEET COUNTY NEEDS

COMMENT: There are not enough public housing units in Johnston County to meet peoples needs. Ideally, in the long run, the county will develop to the extent that people can find more decent paying jobs and will be able to afford good conventional housing. Even if this should occur, however, there will always be a need for some kind of subsidized housing program and public housing for those segments of the population who, for reasons of age, illness, and physical handicaps, cannot work to provide themselves with decent housing. The county should be acting to meet these needs.

There are now 468 public housing units in Johnston County. All these units are within the town limits of Smithfield, Benson, and Selma. Clayton has a housing authority, but it has not been allocated any units and is not active. According to recent estimates, there are more than 550 families on waiting lists for public housing in Johnston County. The turnover (vacancy) rate is very low, and can accommodate less than ten percent of families on the waiting lists each year. Clearly, public housing demand is much higher than the supply.

In November 1971, the County Board of Commissioners created the Johnston County Housing Advisory Committee to make recommendations on housing needs in rural areas. The committee has never met. The county is a member of the Eastern Carolina Regional Housing Authority, a ten county regional organization, but has never requested that it construct any units in Johnston County. The county commissioners should request some recommendation from the Advisory Committee in regard to public housing needs in Johnston County, and to back-up their recommendations with facts and figures. To do otherwise is to ignore a very pressing need.

RECOMMENDATION 10: REGULATIONS GOVERNING MOBILE HOME PARKS IN THE COUNTY SHOULD BE ENACTED

COMMENT: Much of the Housing Task Force's time was spent discussing mobile homes, and the consensus was that some type of regulation of parks is needed. Need for such regulations is reflected in the tremendous increase in mobile homes in the county over the past ten years (over 1,300 units in 1970).

Assistance in developing a "model" mobile home ordinance for Johnston County has been obtained from the Triangle "J" Council of Governments. This ordinance, which will address such matters as definition of a mobile home park, minimum lot sizes, street regulations, open space requirements, buffer zone requirements, and garbage and trash collection, should be available for consideration in the near future.

RECOMMENDATION 11: A ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THE COUNTY, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, SHOULD BE ENACTED

COMMENT: As discussed previously in this report, residential neighborhood quality depends not only on housing conditions themselves, but on the environmental quality of the surrounding area. If a house is adjacent to a factory, railroad track, or feed mill, the living quality is degraded regardless of the condition of the dwelling. These situations can be prevented, or at least minimized, through zoning. Good zoning protects not only residential property owners, but also commercial and industrial property owners and farmers. If a man knows what uses are allowed or prohibited on surrounding properties, he can much more adequately plan the use of his own land knowing that his investment will be secure.

Zoning is only one implementation tool in the community development process. It should not be enacted until after a comprehensive land use plan has been prepared, and should reflect the growth objectives of the plan. County zoning does not have to cover the entire county; zoning can be initiated with as little as 640 acres zoned, and added to in any sized increments. This is important in Johnston County where some areas, such as the proposed airport, could potentially develop in a manner detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of people living and working in that area. Johnston County residents deserve this kind of protection.

RECOMMENDATION 12: SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS APPLICABLE COUNTY-WIDE SHOULD BE ADOPTED

COMMENT: Unlike zoning which regulates the uses to which land can be put, subdivision regulations control the design of roads, drainage improvements and utilities in new residential (and sometimes commercial/industrial) developments. Two purposes of subdivision regulations are to protect the governmental units responsible for taking over maintenance of streets and utilities through insuring that improvements have been constructed to specifications, and to protect the housing consumer who might otherwise be struck with costly improvements to streets and utilities improperly constructed.

Also unlike zoning, subdivision regulations do not have to be based on a land development plan. Therefore they could be enacted at any time in Johnston County. This is particularly important in light of the recent decision by the state Secondary Roads Council that the state will not assume responsibility for maintenance of streets in areas with subdivision characteristics unless those streets are paved to state standards. Without the protection of subdivision

regulations, unknowing housing consumers could be purchasing lots and homes on streets that no one will maintain. Although this is only one example of what can and will happen without subdivision regulations, it well points out the need for them.

RECOMMENDATION 13: THE COUNTY SHOULD INITIATE A BUILDING INSPECTION PROGRAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

COMMENT: Much of the substandard housing existing in Johnston County today is at least partially due to inadequate original construction. Practices of unscrupulous builders and developers who use substandard materials and building techniques are still very much with us today, and the losers are not only the families who move into a new house and find the foundation cracking or floors sloping after a year or two, but the entire community since these poorly constructed homes of today are likely to be the slums of tomorrow.

The North Carolina State Building Code consists of five parts: Volume I (General Construction), Volume I-b (Uniform Residential Building Code), Volume II (Plumbing), Volume III (Heating, Air Conditioning and Ventilation), and Volume IV (National Electrical Code). The entire code is in effect statewide, however local units of government, cities and counties, must provide personnel to enforce the code. Presently Johnston County enforces only Volume IV, the National Electrical Code. Plans of commercial and industrial buildings must be approved by the N.C. Department of Insurance, however, this does not give any protection to the local housing consumer. The county should provide this service. In many counties, the entire cost of a building inspection program is financed with inspection fees. The only people who oppose a building inspection program are the unlicensed contractors and fly-by-night builders who are bilking the public every

day. Farmers are not likely to be opposed since the building code does not apply to farm buildings (except a residence). Assistance in setting up an inspection program can be obtained from the N.C. Department of Insurance, and training for inspectors is available at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill.

There is no reason why this program cannot be implemented immediately by the Board of County Commissioners.

RECOMMENDATION 14: SPECIFIC NUISANCE ORDINANCES SHOULD BE ENACTED BY THE COUNTY TO HELP CONTROL UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

COMMENT: Under Article 6 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes enacted by the 1973 session of the General Assembly, counties now have general ordinance-making power so that they may".....by ordinance define, regulate, prohibit, or abate acts, omissions, or conditions detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of its citizens and the peace and dignity of the county; and may define and abate nuisances." [G.S. 153A-121]. Enforcement may be provided for by fines and penalties.

This authority* gives Johnston County board new powers which it previously did not have. These powers should be used when necessary to help preserve, and to correct when necessary, the environment in Johnston County. Included could be a county ordinance prohibiting littering and depositing of trash or debris on public or private property. Also, an ordinance could be adopted prohibiting the keeping of junked motor vehicles in other than a licensed junkyard. Other situations undoubtedly arise in the future to point the need for specific nuisance ordinances countywide, and they should be adopted and enforced as needed.

*This Act became effective February 1, 1974.

RECOMMENDATION 15: A JUNK CAR REMOVAL PROGRAM SHOULD BE INITIATED BY THE COUNTY

COMMENT: A countywide junk car removal program would not have to be formally sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners, but their support would certainly aid such an effort. In fact, passage of an ordinance prohibiting junk cars in other than licensed junkyards would undoubtedly stimulate public interest in cooperating in a voluntary junk car removal program.

Countywide voluntary programs have enjoyed a high degree of success in other parts of the state, particularly since the price of scrap steel has risen in recent years. More than 400 cars were removed from Franklin County in a program spearheaded by the County Extension Chairman. The county was divided into districts with one person responsible for each district. Release forms were drawn up by the county attorney, and signed releases were obtained from people wanting junk cars removed from their property. A similar program was sponsored in Kenly about a year ago, and could be expanded to a countywide effort.

SUMMARY

Housing problems in Johnston County are acute, and a commitment must be made to help solve them. There is no easy solution or single program which will alleviate the problems discussed in the first portion of this report. However, as part of a coordinated effort to improve community development through a comprehensive planning and management program, housing and neighborhood quality in the county can and must be improved.

Some of the recommendations discussed will cost money, others will cost very little except the expenditure of effort to get a program underway. The important thing is to recognize and admit that problems exist, to make a commitment to help solve the problems, and to take the necessary actions to implement corrective and preventive programs. Adequate programs have not been undertaken by the county in the past. This was vividly pointed out quite recently when three black churches in Johnston County formed a nonprofit corporation to build housing for low-income residents in the area. The group was formed because the county, through the Advisory Committee of the Eastern Carolina Housing Authority, has demonstrated a lack of interest in helping to provide housing opportunities for low income families in the county. Although efforts of private sponsors such as these churches should be applauded and encouraged, it is not enough. The county, through its elected officials, must also do its part. As was so aptly stated by one interested county resident, "There are people who simply see no need for housing; who feel no sense of urgency about the situation." The urgency is evident; a commitment to solutions is not yet apparent.

APPENDIX

JOHNSTON COUNTY HOUSING TASK FORCE

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Jean J. Adams	President, Johnston County Board of Realtors
W. J. Austin	Eastern Carolina Regional Housing Authority
Larry Barbour	Johnston County Farm Bureau
Jerry Cox	Johnston County Farm Bureau
David Creech	Director, Selma Housing Authority
Robert O. Edwards	Federal Land Bank
Cameron M. Garris	Johnston County Extension Service
Norman B. Grantham	Chairman, Johnston County Plng Board
Ben F. Grimes	Director, Smithfield Housing Authority
James H. Griffin	Soil Conservation Service
Robert L. Holt	Johnston County Plng Board
Paul Keller	Director, Johnston County Community Action, Inc.
James F. Peacock	Director, Benson Housing Authority
Leon Powell	Johnston County Health Department
Ottis Ross	Farmers Home Administration
Sidney Sauls	Johnston County Farm Bureau
David Stanaland	Johnston County Extension Service
Gloria Warren	Johnston County Community Action, Inc.
Ernest Whitley	Mobile Home Park Operator

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Johnston County Housing Study

1) Summary: The Johnston County Housing Study discusses five major subjects: the importance of good housing to Johnston County, housing supply, housing quality and characteristics, demand for housing, and recommendations on how to improve the housing stock in the county. The first four sections deal primarily with factual background data. Fourteen recommendations range from general needs (initiation of a comprehensive planning and management program for community development), to specific programs (mobile home park regulations and junk car removal program). The report emphasizes the importance of improving overall neighborhood environment and community facilities as well as individual houses.

2) Impact of Proposed Policies if they are Carried Out: The fourteen recommendations in this report are intended to improve the physical and social environment in Johnston County. Positive impacts of each recommendation are discussed within the text of the report. The impacts discussed, however, are for the most part primary consequences of specific actions, and potential secondary consequences should also be noted.

The concepts discussed in the housing study involve total community development, including problem identification, statement of community (county) goals, project planning and implementation, and program evaluation. All of these functions are needed in Johnston County to help ensure the wisest use of local resources, including human resources. It should be recognized, however, that a comprehensive community development program, including sophisticated management, in Johnston County may stimulate growth and reverse the

trend of outmigration. If this happens there may be more opportunities presented to degrade the natural environment through increased building, sprawl, erosion, flooding, etc. It should also be noted, however, that without proper planning and management these problems are still multiplying today because, even though there is net outmigration from the county, there is a redistribution of population within the county. This has led to environmentally unsound practices of flood-plain encroachment, use of septic tanks on unsuitable soils, and so on. Therefore, while good management of the environment may stimulate growth, lack of such management certainly does not ensure maintenance of a good environment.

3) Adverse Environmental Effects Which Cannot be Avoided Should the Proposed Policies be Implemented: This point has been touched upon in the above comment. The policies recommended in this report are very broad and encompassing. The manner in which they are implemented, if at all, will determine to a great extent whether or not adverse environmental effects will result. Adverse environmental effects are much more likely to occur if the proposed policies are not implemented. For example, recommendations are made for land use planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, detail soil survey, etc. All of these programs should have positive environmental consequences if properly implemented. One possible exception might be lack of preserving prime agricultural land, however this is only speculation. (This point is brought out in number 5 below.)

4) Alternatives to the Proposed Policies and Analysis of Those Alternatives: Since the proposed policies and programs encompass almost the entire gamut of planning, management, and development, the alternative is to not plan, manage, or develop (although development could not be stopped - only the planning and management). It is not practical to evaluate alternatives for each

one of the fourteen recommendations in the report. If the individual recommendations, such as zoning or subdivision regulations, are seriously contemplated, analyses of alternatives should be made at that time.

5) Relationship Between Short Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long Term Productivity:

Comments on this point must be vague due to the nature of recommendations made. What it boils down to in most situations is the traditional argument between and among conservationists (while they were still known by that term) of whether conservation means nonuse or best use of manmade and/or natural resources (which does not rule out the possibility that the best long term "use" is nonuse or preservation).

For example, if the recommendation for preparation of a land use plan is carried out, how will prime agricultural land be treated? As an economic resource? As a nonrenewable natural resource? As the best land to build upon since it requires fewer building material resources? As the best land for septic tank sewage disposal? While prime agricultural land frequently affords the best building sites, should it be preserved for a time when food production in the United States will have to be increased? When a land development plan is prepared for Johnston County, these important questions should be considered and evaluated.

6) Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources if Proposed Policies Implemented: The major resource needed to implement proposed policies and programs is money. A comprehensive planning and management program necessary to improve housing and residential neighborhood environments would require considerable outlays of money (and some natural resources if facilities such as public housing are constructed). However, short and long term benefits are expected to justify reasonable costs.

7) Other Interests and Considerations of Federal or State Policy Thought to Offset Adverse Environmental Effects of Proposed Policies and Programs: Additional impact statements may be required if specific recommendations are implemented with state or federal assistance.

8) Applicable Federal, State, or Local Environmental Controls:

- "201" Facility Plans for wastewater treatment plants
- Johnston County Health Department regulations governing installation and operation of septic tanks
- National Environmental Policy Act
- North Carolina Environmental Policy Act
- North Carolina Sedimentation Control Act

9) Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize Impact: These will be outlined in EIS for specific projects as implemented.

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